

One Minute Statement
Hon. Tim Bishop
December 14, 2005
Fix the Medicare Benefit

Mr. Speaker, hundreds of seniors in my district showed up to 5 town halls I hosted over the past month to explain the Medicare drug benefit.

For as much interest as my constituents demonstrated, they are just as confused and frustrated in the “daunting task” – as President Bush put it yesterday – of understanding and then choosing one of three dozen drug plans with different premiums, deductibles, co-payments, and lists of covered drugs.

Through no fault of their own, seniors are already encountering delays in their applications. Consequently, many won’t receive their drug cards until after the sign-up deadline.

But we shouldn’t be surprised by a benefit whose flawed design was the result of ideology prevailing over practicality.

It’s up to us, here and now, to make sure seniors understand their benefit and receive – without further delay – the affordable, life-saving drugs they deserve.

The first step should be extending the sign-up deadline by at least six months. I urge my colleagues to support this simple measure.

Mr. Speaker, this Administration is carrying out the drug benefit as if it's good enough for government work, but America's seniors deserve much better.